



Find your "Happy Place" in Walnut Ridge and Lawrence County

Located at the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Northeast Arkansas, Walnut Ridge and Lawrence County offer a wonderful quality of life. Low cost of living, economic growth, affordable housing, great public schools, low crime and friendly people are found here! This rural area is picturesque and diverse with its rolling hills and rich Delta bottom flat lands which are ideal for its vast agriculture, poultry and livestock production.

The county boasts three rivers, the Strawberry, Spring, and Black that are not only beautiful but afford many outdoor activities such as canoeing, floating, rafting, kayaking and wonderful fishing opportunities. Walleye, rock, spotted and smallmouth bass, flathead and channel catfish, longear and warmouths, as well as other species are bountiful in these natural and unpolluted waters.

The **Shirey Bay-Rainey Brake Wildlife Management Area** encompasses approximately 11,000 acres. The majority of the WMA approximately 8,000 acres, is located on the west side of Black River and is known as the Rainey Brake portion. Approximately 3,000 acres lies on the east side of Black River and is known as the Shirey Bay portion. The area contains diverse upland and bottomland topography offering excellent waterfowl, deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbit, and raccoon hunting. The area also provides excellent fishing and primitive camping opportunities for sportsmen.

Duck hunting is another popular sport in the county and several duck hunting guide services are available.

If you enjoy the peace and tranquility of nature, then **Lake Charles State Park** is a MUST for you! It is a peaceful place located on a 645-acre lake filled with bass, crappie, bream, and catfish. It boasts being the place where the largest number of 20-inch bass have been caught in Northeast Arkansas. A full line of bait and tackle is available at the visitor center from March through October. There are 60 campsites, a third of which are Class AAA, with many spots right on the water. A yurt offers an additional lodging option. The park is also a great getaway in fall and winter months with four hiking trails and a 3-D archery range (open November through February) Also within walking distance are picnic sites, a standard pavilion (screened with ceiling fans), launch ramp, swimming beach, and playground. The visitor center's gift shop offers gift items, camping supplies, and snacks.

Nearby, you don't want to miss visiting the **Historic Powhatan State Park** which offers workshops and tours. The uniqueness of this park is in its preservation: all six historic buildings stand in their original 19th-century locations. The 1888 courthouse contains exhibits interpreting the commerce and culture of Lawrence County from Reconstruction through the early 20th century and is free to the public. Guided tours by knowledgeable interpreters are available in the remaining historical structures, including a log house, school, church, and jail.

Just across the highway within walking distance is the **Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives**. Here you will find some of the oldest records in Arkansas that were written by quill with homemade ink. It is a genealogist and historian treasure trove!

Lawrence County has an impressive military history! During World War II Walnut Ridge was the location of the Army Air Forces Basic Flying School from 1942-1944, Marine Corps Air Facility (1944-1945), Temporary POW Camp (July-Dec. 1945 Germans), WWII Warbird Storage, Sales, Salvage (1945-1948), USAF 725th AC&W Squadron (1956-1963), and now is the location of the **Wings of Honor Museum** Established 1999. The museum contains a collection of many artifacts and a research library with over 2,500 volumes on Aviation, The Great War, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and scores of land and sea battles... the collections include over 400 aviation cadet class books and air field annuals, and scores of WWII Newsmaps and Aerial Navigation Charts. The library has photos and brief bios on some 20,000 of the 195,000 Arkansans who served in WWII. See the Tribute to the 4,500+ Arkansans killed in WWII.

The British Invasion comes to Walnut Ridge Airport in 1964! A stopover at Walnut Ridge Airport was but a footnote in the history of the legendary band, but it was much more than that for the community that had a surprise encounter with the one and only Beatles. Visit www.beatlesattheridge.com to get the rest of the story. And learn about the annual music festival held on the third weekend of September commemorating the town's once in a lifetime encounter with the world famous band.

In September 2011, the city of Walnut Ridge dedicated a life-size sculpture of the Beatles in the city's downtown area. The artwork depicts the group as they appear on the Abbey Road album cover. The **Beatles Sculpture** is called "The British Invasion of the Rock 'N' Roll Highway," in reference to Walnut Ridge's location along the historic Rock 'N' Roll Highway 67.

Guitar Walk, located in Walnut Ridge, is a 115 foot-long by 40-foot-wide guitar, based on an Epiphone Casino played by John Lennon, honoring the musicians that played along the nearby Rock 'N' Roll Highway 67. The guitar features nine audio plaques dedicated to American musical legends, including Conway Twitty, Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Sonny Burgess and Billy Lee Riley. The intro plaque features audio from Gov. Mike Beebe discussing growing up along Rock 'N' Roll Highway 67 and the importance music has played in the history of Arkansas.

Lawrence County Rail-Trail is a 6.7-mile asphalt paved trail for walking, running, biking, inline skating and is wheelchair accessible. Beginning in Hoxie, continuing north through Walnut Ridge and ending near the Walnut Ridge Regional Airport this trail provides fresh air and exercise on this very enjoyable jaunt through the outdoors.

Williams Baptist University is a leading four-year Christian liberal arts institution. Situated on a 200-acre campus in Walnut Ridge, WBU offers students a learning experience that will guide them to launch a life with purpose. With more than 25 majors, pre-professional programs and graduate degrees, WBU prepares students for a wide array of career options. WBU is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. WBU has a total enrollment of about 600 students, with most residing on-campus. The student-teacher ratio of 14:1 enables us to deliver personalized instruction in a warm, Christ-centered environment. The university is owned and operated by the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

Lawrence County is literally a crossroads for transportation! Three major highways – 67 (future I-57), 63 & 412 converge in the Walnut Ridge/Hoxie area along with the intersection of two major railways,

Union Pacific (north-south) and Burlington Northern Sante Fe (East-West). The only **AmTrak Station** serving Northeast Arkansas is located in Walnut Ridge with service north to Chicago and South to San Antonio. The Walnut Ridge Regional Airport is one of the largest in the state with two (a 5,000 and a 6,000 foot) runways, with instrument approach.

Walnut Ridge and Lawrence County benefitted from an exceptional year for growth in 2018, which lead to a 10.8% increase in City sales tax for the County seat of Walnut Ridge and a 6.8% increase in their portion of the County sales tax. Many new restaurants and businesses have been and are continuing to spring up. Expectations are high for 2019 with several projects under construction. Allegis will complete a new distribution center and is expected to open in February. The first phase of the new Helena Ag facility will be open for the planting season this year and a major expansion on Cavanaugh Chevrolet will be completed in 2019, along with the construction of a brand new Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge dealership facility. Traffic counts are growing on highways inside Walnut Ridge and throughout the county, increasing expectations of new development related to the opening of Future I-57 from Little Rock to the Walnut Ridge city limits.

Welcome to Walnut Ridge and Lawrence County! We'd love for you to visit or come stay!